

AMENDMENTS

In the Claims

1. - 7. (Cancelled)

8. (Previously Presented) A central management apparatus for managing devices connected to device management units by data communication with first and second device management units using different communication methods, the central management apparatus comprising:

a memory for storing a first transmission time set for the first device management unit and a second transmission time set for the second device management unit;

a first counting unit for counting elapsed time from the first transmission time when data have not been received from the first device management unit at the first transmission time;

a second counting unit for counting the elapsed time from the second transmission time when data have not been received from the second device management unit at the second transmission time;

a threshold setting unit for setting a first threshold value for the first device management unit and setting a second threshold value different from the first threshold value for the second device management unit; and

a determining unit for determining a no reception condition when the elapsed time by the first counting unit exceeds the first threshold value or the elapsed time counted by the second counting unit exceeds the second threshold value.

9. (Previously Presented) The central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 8, further comprising:

a fixed-time transmission time setting unit for setting the next fixed-time transmission time for each device; and

a transmission unit for transmitting the set fixed-time transmission time to the device management unit connected to each device.

10. (Previously Presented) The central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the fixed-time transmission time setting unit sets the next fixed-time transmission time in accordance with a respective communication method of the connected device management unit.

11. (Previously Presented) The central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein the fixed-time transmission time setting unit allots an earlier time to devices having an allowable time set by the setting unit which is longer than devices having an allowable time which is shorter.

12. (Previously Presented) The central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the communication method of the first device management unit is a method for transmitting data over a public telephone line, and the communication method of the second device management unit is a method for transmitting data by electronic mail over the internet.

13. (Previously Presented) The central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 12, wherein the threshold setting unit sets the threshold value of the first device management unit so as to be shorter than the threshold value of the second device management unit.

14. (Previously Presented) The central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the devices are image forming apparatuses.

15. (Previously Presented) A management system including a central management apparatus, a first device management unit for data communication with the central management apparatus using a first communication method, and a second device management unit for data communication with the central management apparatus using a second communication method, the first device management unit comprising:

a first transmission unit for transmitting data relating to a connected device to the central management apparatus at a first fixed time,

the second device management unit comprising:

a second transmission unit for transmitting data relating to a connected device to the central management apparatus at a second fixed time, the central management apparatus comprising:

a memory for storing a first transmission time set for the first device management unit

and a second transmission time set for second device management unit;

a first counting unit for counting elapsed time from the first transmission time when data have not been received from the first device management unit at the first transmission time;

a second counting unit for counting elapsed time from the second transmission time when data have not been received from the second device management unit at the second transmission time;

a threshold setting unit for setting a first threshold value for the first device management unit, and setting a second threshold value different from the first threshold value for the second device management unit; and

a determining unit for determining a no reception condition when the elapsed time counted by the first counting unit exceeds the first threshold value or the elapsed time counted by the second counting unit exceeds the second threshold value.

16. (Previously Presented) The management system as claimed in Claim 15, wherein the first communication method is a method for transmitting data over a public telephone line, and the second communication method is a method for transmitting data by electronic mail over the internet.

17. (Previously Presented) A management system as claimed in Claim 16, wherein the threshold setting unit sets the threshold value of the first device management unit to be shorter than the threshold value of the second device management unit.

18. (Previously Presented) The management system as claimed in Claim 15, wherein the devices are image forming apparatuses.